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LECTURE

ON THE

PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE OF GOD,

WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

LOTTERIES AND GAMES OF CHANCE:

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE WINCHESTER LYCEUM,

ON

Monday Evening, March 21, 1842.

BY REV. DR. HILL.

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LECTURE.

In the Lyceum, as it was originally established at Athens, by Aristotle, there were lectures of two sorts delivered. One course was delivered in the morning, and was designed particularly for his pupils, who were studying the higher branches of philosophy. None but the *initiated* could profit by those profoundly erudite and metaphysical lectures, which taught the peculiar and select doctrines of his peripatetic philosophy. The second kind of lectures of the Lyceum were delivered in the evening, and were designed for common use, and were calculated to exert an extensive influence over popular opinion, and to form and govern a correct public sentiment. These last lectures were delivered in a plain familiar style, let down to a level of the common people, embracing subjects of general utility, and suited to regulate the morals and manners of the community.

I shall leave to others, who have more taste and capacity for such things, to deliver lectures upon mental science and metaphysical abstractions, upon philosophical and historical researches, or the refinements of the fine arts. But professing only to be a plain, every-day man, I expect my subject and my lecture will, in their nature and character, plainly shew their paternity.

The subject which I am about to announce to you, as that which is to claim our attention this evening, is one which is supposed to be familiar to every body, and which most men think they understand perfectly. But common as this subject is, it is one which is generally despatched very carelessly, as of very little moment; while but few men give themselves the trouble to examine it with attention, and trace it in all its ramifications and serious consequences.

The very common use of games of chance, for amusement or emolument — the frequency of public and private lotteries — the enormous system of fraud which grows out of them — the extensive influence of their principles throughout the community — the facility with which many well-disposed persons are seduced into their practice and defence — and the fatal consequences of being drawn into this fearful vortex — all these seem to require an investigation into the true nature and proper use of the Lot. Your serious and candid attention, therefore, will now be invited to a few remarks upon this subject.

My audience may now prepare themselves to hear some new and startling sentiments advanced, and very unexpected ground taken in this investigation. I do not calculate upon gaining the ready assent

of all who hear me, to the sentiments I shall bring forward, or to the principles and positions I shall advance and defend. I shall, therefore, begin, prepared to fight my way, step by step, against formidable objections, deep-rooted preconceived opinions, and popular prejudices — all arising from the want of reflection and general information upon this subject.

But, for fear some one may be needlessly alarmed by this declaration, I would here guard you against supposing that I am about to denounce and condemn all lotteries and decisions of chance, without mercy. This will be so far from the truth, that you will find, before I am done, that I am a friend to lotteries, and an advocate for them, in their legitimate and proper uses; and that it is only against their abuse, and the dangerous consequences of such abuse, that I mean to set myself in opposition.

Then let us now enquire, *What is a lot, or a decision by chance, as it is generally called? A lot is an action, or event, intended to decide a point, without the aid, or beyond the control, of human skill or power.* This definition includes every form of the lot, or any decision, which in common language is said to be left to chance.

Thus, whether the lot, or the chance, consists in drawing a ticket out of a lottery wheel, after it has been turned round to prevent collusion — or in the position of a die, which is thrown, after being rattled in a box — or in the particular distribution of a pack of cards, after a promiscuous shuffle — or in the tossing of a piece of money — is a matter of no moment. The principle of the *action*, in all these cases, is still the same; the decision to be effected, is designedly put beyond the control of human skill or power.

My design is to show that every such action, or decision, is a direct *appeal* to the Living God, as the Governor of the Universe; and that his holy providence is concerned in all such events.

Now, I would bespeak your cool and deliberate attention to the arguments about to be adduced, and you will find that there is nothing *sectarian* in this dogma, nor is it fraught with as much *absurdity, or superstition*, as you may at first have supposed. For, if it be not an appeal to Deity, what is it? not a reference to a human tribunal; for it is so constructed as purposely to exclude man's jurisdiction. Nor is it a reference to any other creatures, superior to man; for this would be to ascribe to such creatures the attribute of omnipresence, which belongs to God alone. Would you say, it was a reference to *chance?* That is downright *atheism.* Chance, in common parlance, means something which happens in a manner unforeseen or unexpectedly by man. In this sense the term is harmless enough. But when used philosophically, i. e. when applied to the doctrine of *cause* and *effect*, it is either absurd, or it is blasphemous. For what is

chance? It either has a real existence, or it has not. If not, then, when you say a lot is determined by chance, you say that it is determined by nothing; — i. e. you say, here is a sensible effect, produced by no cause at all. This is pure nonsense. But if your chance has a real existence, then, pray, what sort of a being is it? Either it has life, intelligence, or power — or it has not. If not, then you say that there are millions of effects produced (for there are millions of lotteries in the world) by a cause which has neither power, nor intelligence, nor life — that is, you say that millions of actions are performed by an agency which is essentially incapable of any action whatever. And this is as pure an absurdity as the other. But if you say your chance is a living, intelligent, active being, I would ask, Who is it? Where is it to be found? Or how you got your knowledge of it? You must certainly imagine it to possess omnipresence and omnipotence, for you suppose it capable of producing, at the same time, millions of effects in millions of places. And thus you have found out a being that displays the perfections of God, and yet is no God. This conclusion is as blasphemous as the other is insane. There is no retreat. Survey the subject in any possible light, and you are driven to this issue, that the lot is, by the very nature of the case, a direct appeal to the Living God, who overrules and governs all things; and as the appeal is to Him, so his providence regulates the event.

But to many it seems irrational, if not irreverent, to suppose that the Great Eternal God, who inhabits eternity, should descend to such little affairs, and take cognizance of such things as only administer to our amusements, or agitate our passions. They can conceive well enough of a providence which keeps worlds in their orbits, and legislates for the universe. This grand general view of the subject fills them with magnificent ideas, as they suppose, of the Great Supreme. But to such petty concerns as the common incidents of human life, they would judge it beneath his majesty and felicity to attend!!! This sort of argumentation is not the only instance in which *atheism* puts on the *cloak of reverence for the Deity.*

I would not assert that all who adopt such notions, or who use such language, are atheists; but that the doctrine itself is atheistical, there can be no doubt. It makes a distinction between a general and a particular providence, admitting the former, but exploding the latter. According to this doctrine, we are to believe that Jehovah rules the whole of his universe, but has nothing to do with its constituent parts; or that he has fixed certain laws by which its operations go on, independently of his interposition.

A fine race of creatures, truly! that can live, and move, and have their being, in a state of complete separation from the influence and

control of their Creator! According to this scheme, he has had no sort of influence over them, nor interest in them, from the moment he gave them out of his plastic hand; and never shall have again, during the whole course of their existence!

And as for those who dream of his presiding over suns and stars, without noticing the puny inhabitants of our globe, they might with equal reason dream of his creating suns and stars without his having belittled himself (forgive the expression) by creating men, and beasts, and insects, at all: for that which it is not unworthy of him to create, is not unworthy of him to preserve and govern. It would surely be inverting all propriety, to maintain that, in proportion as creatures are feeble, they can dispense with his fostering care; and that rational creatures, formed for immortality, are exempted from the empire of his law: for however artfully the sophist may play off his quibbles, a sound mind will perceive that, without a particular and over-ruling providence, man cannot be an accountable being.

This doctrine of a particular providence, extending even to the most trivial occurrences, pervades the whole system of Revelation; and is stated with the utmost precision and perspicuity. Texts of Scripture without number might be quoted to prove this doctrine, but we must content ourselves, for the present, with only one or two.—"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing; yet not one of them falleth to the ground without your Father"—"But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered." What can appear of less importance than the perishing of a sparrow?—and what more worthless and insignificant than a hair of one's head? And yet the faithful and true witness has said that both these are the objects of the divine regard. The great philosopher and political economist, Malthus, uses this language: "It accords with the most liberal spirit of philosophy, (says he,) to believe that not a stone can fall, nor a plant rise, without the immediate agency of divine power." This is good sense, and Christianity owns it all. If, then, the Providence of God directs and disposes the most minute affairs, by what reasoning shall it be proved to have no concern with lots?—especially since he has declared that the lot is under his immediate inspection and control? "*The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*"—This will be decisive with him who, in simplicity and reverence, enquires after truth. But as arguments addressed to the lovers of dissipation and gain are apt to make *the worse appear the better reason*, we shall pursue a little further this atheistical denial, that providence is concerned in the drawing of a ticket or the casting of a die.

To deny, then, that the divine providence is concerned in the decisions obtained by lot, is to deny that it has any concern with individuals, or their actions; for it cannot be shown that the government

of God affects *any individual* or *any action*, but upon the broad principle of its extending to *every individual* and *every action*. If the position of my opponent be correct, a line of distinction must be drawn between those persons and those actions which are under his immediate control, and those persons and those actions which are not. If there are individuals to whom his providence, which is another name for his government, does not reach, then all such individuals are exempted from the obligations of his law, and are neither *accountable* nor *dependent;* for it is absurd to talk of dependence, and law, and responsibility, while you exclude God's agency, for it is God's ascertaining facts, motives, and characters, that lays the only proper basis upon which a perfect judgment can be formed.

If, on the other hand, the divine providence embraces all persons, but not all their actions, it follows that the actions thus omitted are not subject to the divine law, and of course that men are at one period of their lives amenable to God for their conduct, and at another period are not amenable; and, between these two states, of being with and without the law of God, they are perpetually vibrating. But how can they know when these alterations take place? God has not revealed it. How, then, can they find it out? Certainly no judicious man can be reconciled to so miserable a subterfuge from a pinching argument.

The only alternative, then, is, that the providence of God directs every thing—or nothing. If the former, then even the drawing of a lot, or the casting of a die—if the latter, we are plunged into atheism at once; for a God that does not superintend and govern the world, with every thing in it or about it, is no God at all.

We shall now examine another of the arguments of the opponents of my doctrine, which is this: "*That God has fixed certain laws in the physical world—that the doctrine of chances, founded upon these laws, forms the subject of calculation—and that their operation is the only thing to be seen in the combination of chances.*" This is the most specious objection that can be advanced on that side of the subject. I readily assent to the proposition, but contend that the objection grounded upon it is either *futile* or *impious*. FUTILE—for it amounts to no more than this, *that the Most High acts by second causes, or by means of the laws of nature;* unless, indeed, these second causes can act without him, or separate from him. The objection, to have any force, must mean, that they can so act *without God*. And, then, it is IMPIOUS—for it strikes at the whole government of God, in so far as it is carried on through the medium of physical laws, or the laws of nature, as they are called; for if his providence has no concern in *one*, *two*, or *twenty* actions, it must be equally unconcerned in all such actions or events. And thus we arrive at the old infe-

rence again, "*that God has nothing to do with us or our affairs.*" — This mode of reasoning, pushed a little farther, would expel every thing but physical laws, or the laws of nature, out of the universe; for if I may shut my Maker out of all events happening according to these laws, why not exclude myself and every rational agent? And if I set my neighbor's house on fire, or cut his throat, why not refer these actions to the class of facts happening according to the laws of muscular motion, which is only another name for the laws of nature? You shall not tell me that my rational or moral nature acted through the instrumentality of the fire-brand or the knife; because this is to resort to what you just now denied, viz., "*that intelligent and moral power ever acted by physical means, or through the established laws of nature.*" On my principle I admit your *solution*, but then it spoils your *philosophy;* for I shall as soon believe that an axe can hew wood without the agency of man, as that physical events can be produced, or natural laws exist, without the agency of God. And I shall as soon deny the hewing of wood, with an axe in my hand, to be my own act, as to deny the production of an event, brought about by physical laws, to be an act of divine providence. In truth, all moral order is maintained, and all moral events come to pass, by the intervention of physical law. And thus the conclusion forces itself upon us, that the disposing of a lot, or the falling of a die, is as much and as truly the act of God, as if he were to perform it by some visible interposition; and, therefore, a wanton or needless appeal to him, by the lot, is a profanation of his name, and of course becomes an impious act. It will not avail to plead "*the unseemliness of supposing that men of profane minds can, when they please, compel the Almighty to become umpire between them, when they wish to amuse themselves, or try to filch away each other's property, by a game at cards or backgammon.*" Here we have a specimen of atheistical piety again. To save the Almighty the *trouble* of administering his government in this wicked world, they would shut him out of his kingdom altogether.

The same objection would apply *to an oath;* and there are many oaths uttered around the card table, and the apparatus of a gambler.

"*Shall men of profane minds compel the Almighty, at their pleasure, to ascend his throne of state, to notice and decide on swearing, and purjuries, and blasphemies?*" Such language is irreverent, and ought not to be uttered. The argument, however, may be retorted thus: "Shall the laws of God's world be suspended, or his ordinary agency interrupted, because men choose to be wicked? Shall they oblige him to work miracles, in order to keep himself out of the way, whenever they may incline to sport with his providences?" Nay! — his appointments stand — his laws and his government go on — and his agency in them ceases not for a moment; and if men will pervert

them to an unholy use, he will not alter his course to prevent either their crime or their punishment.

But to exhibit this matter in another light: If the divine providence is not to be considered, in the decisions of the lot, why is it to be considered in any other action? And if in no other actions, upon what principle can there be any religious worship? Why should men pray? Is the Most High to leave them in their pastimes, or seasons of gambling, and then come at their beck, in their hours of trouble, when they choose to pray? At this rate, how can there be any future retribution? For this proceeds altogether upon the supposition of God's perpetual presence and agency — as there is none in heaven or earth but himself, who is always present, in every place, beholding the evil and the good, and who is, therefore, capable of rendering to every man according to his works.

The sum is this: That against the interposition of God's providence in decisions by lot, there can be advanced no arguments which do not lead directly to atheism; consequently, all such arguments are sophistical — are false — and a decision by lot, is a decision of God's own providence. The lot, therefore, in every form, and under all circumstances, is an appeal to HIM, and ought to be used, if used at all, in a manner suited to such a grave and serious subject.

What the proper use of the lot is — when and how it ought to be used — and how it is awfully profaned and abused — are now to be considered, so far as the short remnant of our time will permit.

We shall now undertake to show — *what* the proper use of the lot is — and *when* and *how* it ought to be used.

You may have observed, that, thus far in our argument, very little use has been made of the scriptures; not because very little is said in the bible upon this subject — the bible is full of it. We shall, even now, have very little time for arguments from that quarter; we can only quote a few passages, and shall have to despatch even these few with very little comment. My doctrine is clothed with authority much higher than that of abstract argument. It has the authority of God's own oracles. "*The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.*" This text cannot comprehend less than the following assumptions: 1st. That, as soon as the lot leaves the hand of man, it passes into the hand of God. 2nd. That the direction of the lot to its issue is God's own act. 3rd. That he acknowledges the result as a judgment given by himself.

Can there remain any doubt, on this point, with a serious mind? Is there any suspicion that the reasoning upon it may have been overstrained, or the sense of the passage just quoted mistaken? Let us then compare it with a few other scriptural facts.

The Patriarch Jacob, on his dying bed, foretold, by the spirit of

prophecy, the future condition of his sons, and even marked out with great precision the very districts of the promised land which several of them should inherit. Moses, in his parting blessing, was equally particular with respect to several of the tribes. And yet the land of their inheritance, by divine command, was to be divided out to them *by lot*, and was actually so divided, under the inspiration of Joshua, Eliazur, and the principal men of the nation.

Thus, also, in the election of the first King of Israel. Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjaman, was pointed out to Samuel the prophet, by special revelation, as the man whom God designed for that high station. "And the Lord had told Samuel in his ear, a day before Saul came, saying, to-morrow about this time I will send thee a man whom I spake to thee of." In pursuance of this intimation, Samuel took Saul apart, and poured a vial of oil over his head, and kissed him, and said, "It is because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance." Let it be remembered that this whole affair was transacted between Samuel and the new Monarch alone, as all witnesses were designedly excluded. Shortly after, Samuel assembled the tribes of Israel before God in Mizpeh. He ordered them to present themselves by tribes, and choose their King by lot. The tribes came near, the lot was cast, and fell, first on the tribe, next on the family, and finally on the person of Saul.

When Jericho was taken and destroyed, the Lord forbade the Israelites to save any of the plunder found in the place, as it was all devoted to destruction. But Achan could not resist the temptation to save a wedge of gold and a rich Babylonish garment which he cautiously hid in his tent. No one was privy to it but himself, yet the curse of God was upon Israel on that account, and they were discomfited and fled before their enemies with a great slaughter. Joshua was directed by God to search for the thief, and the accursed thing, by resorting to the lot. The tribes, families, households, and individuals, were all subjected to the trial by lot, and Achan was taken.—Neither Joshua nor any one else, but the culprit himself, knew who was guilty; yet here was a tribunal that never erred, because the omniscient God presided at it. Other instances are at hand, but these must suffice for the present.

But an objector may say, "that the lots mentioned in scripture are extraordinary cases, and owed their infallible results to the fact, that they were resorted to by express divine command, and that the same authoritative command of God is equally necessary in every similar application of the lot, and, therefore, that the instances referred to neither prove his particular agency, in ordinary lots, nor furnish any general principle of reasoning as to the nature and use of lots in general."

The objection is more specious than solid, as may easily be made to appear. 1st. It is incorrect in its facts; for although there are instances of God's directing an appeal to be made to him by lot, for special purposes, yet there are others, and those not a few, in which the appeal was not made upon any such divine command, and so must have rested upon the known nature, design, and use of the lot. 2nd. The objection we are considering is incorrect in its assumption, viz., that it was the special injunction of God which converted the lot into an appeal to himself: whereas, the injunction presupposes such an appeal to be an essential part of the lot; and, in appointing it to be employed on special occasions, he only made use of a known method of bringing the matter before the divine tribunal, in preference to other methods which might have been selected. 3rd. The objection throws its authors and advocates into that gulf of atheism, to which it has already been demonstrated that the denial of God's providence in the lot most certainly tends.

From the whole of the foregoing remarks, we collect, "That the lot is an act of high and solemn worship, as all appeals to Almighty God must necessarily be; and that it ought never to be resorted to, but on grave and weighty matters, which would warrant such an appeal.

What then are the proper uses of the lot, and when is it proper to resort to it? *Answer.* The uses of the lot are twofold. 1st. It bears witness to a *particular providence*. It does not merely acknowledge God as an upright Judge, who will, at such times as shall please him, reward the good and punish the wicked; but it incorporates with that act of worship, a profession of faith, that he is *present* to pronounce judgment *on the spot*. It is his *finger* which moves the lot, and it is his *voice* which utters the decree. The operation of the lot, then, is to check, by a *visible rebuke*, that forgetfulness of God to which we are all so prone, and which produces in all their variety the bitter fruits of iniquity and woe. It asserts God's dominion, not only over every world but over every creature, and over all the circumstances which relate to that creature's happiness or misery. It erects a barrier against the inroads of both speculative and practical atheism — and it strengthens the influence of that pure and undefiled religion, which is built upon the doctrine of a particular overruling and superintending providence.

2nd. The lot is of use to determine and decide different questions of moment, among men. Like an oath, it is a last resort. The one appeals to God, for the sincerity of our declarations; the other, for the direction of our choice. They are different forms of acknowledging his government; but the effect of both is the same — to put an end to strife and contention, and to put a limit to human research and interference.

Thus they are presented in scripture. On the one hand it is said, "An oath for confirmation is an end of all strife." On the other hand, "The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty." The parallel is exact, and leads, in the next place, to consider, "When is the use of the lot proper?"

In the general, in all cases of importance, which must be decided, and cannot be decided by other means, in the exercise of our reason. The lot may also be used for the *prevention* and *termination of strife*. The case must also be *important*. For appeals to the Living God, with thoughtless frequency, or upon trivial occasions, is an impiety which cannot be indulged with impunity, nor thought of without horror. The case must also be difficult, and such as our best discretion would be incapable to bring to a safe and comfortable issue. For if we appeal directly to the judgment of God in things which may be fairly and wisely settled without so appealing, we depreciate the use and value of our own rational faculties, by superseding their proper exercise — we disturb the order which God has established, by subjecting the tribunal of human reason to the tribunal of his supremacy; seeing we attempt to abolish the inferior tribunal of human reason, by withdrawing causes from it which belong to its proper jurisdiction: and thus impeaching his wisdom, and not honoring his throne, we impiously *tempt* the Almighty, and provoke him to inflict a curse upon us instead of a blessing.

Cases in which the lot may be lawfully resorted to are such as these: *The division of property*, when the portions of it are adjusted with impartiality and skill, and yet the claimants cannot agree among themselves about the distribution. *The appointment of men to an office or service of peculiar interest and hazard*, when more men than are requisite are at hand, and appear to possess qualification and disqualification equally balanced. *The selection of victims*, when there are several involved in the same crime, and are under the same condemnation; but the government, leaning to mercy, yet resolving to make an example, requires only a part of the criminals to suffer.

Many other cases, which may readily be imagined, might be added.

I have one more question to be answered, which is, "*How should the use of the lot be conducted?*" As the use of the lot, according to scripture usage, is an act of religious worship, the glorious Majesty of Him with whom they have to do should be seriously present to the minds of the worshippers. Passion, levity, and indifference, should be carefully laid aside — the name of God invoked by prayer — and the lot cast, as under his eye and control. When the issue is declared, the parties concerned should repress every feeling of resentment or dissatisfaction, and acquiese with promptitude and reverence, as they undoubtedly would have done had their Almighty Umpire

rendered himself visible, and given sentence with an audible voice in their hearing.

There cannot be a happier elucidation of the right manner of applying the lot, than is found in our bible. Allusion it now had to the *election*, by the eleven Apostles, of a colleague to supply the place of Judas the traitor. They knew that an appointment to the apostolical office could only be made by their master, the Great Head of the church. They knew, however, that an Apostle should have certain qualifications, which Peter, one of their number, had just enumerated. They looked around among the brethren, and found *two* who were thus qualified. They had now gone as far as they could go in fixing upon the man, by the rules prescribed. But an insuperable difficulty here presented itself, in the fact, that there were *two* who appeared to be fully yet equally qualified, while only *one* was needed to fill up their ranks. They, therefore, very justly and properly determined to refer the decision to their Almighty Saviour. Having set the candidates before God, they prayed, and said, "Thou Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen; that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Mathias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles."

The decision was received with profound submission as the decision of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Not a soul disputed it. Not a whisper of doubt or discontent was heard.

I apprised my hearers, at the outset, that they would find me, before I concluded, an advocate for the use of the lot. This pledge I trust I have now redeemed; for you have had the honest convictions of my mind upon this subject, after the most serious and diligent investigation I could pay to it. I have now advanced and defended the doctrine of legitimate scriptural lotteries: such as God authorised and commanded — such as our Saviour sanctioned — and such as the inspired prophets and apostles practiced. Let all good people, in their use of the lot, be governed by these rules and principles, and they need not fear meeting the approbation of him who is to be their Judge.

In pursuing our argument thus far, we have, we hope, established to the satisfaction of every candid and reflecting mind the two following propositions, viz.: 1st. That the lot is a direct appeal to God, as the Governor of the world, founded upon the faith of a particular overruling providence. 2nd. That when used on proper occasions, and in a proper manner, both of which have just been explained, it becomes an act of high and acceptable worship of God.

From this doctrine, the conclusion is plain and irresistible, that all unnecessary, light, careless, or customary uses of the lot, are sinful, and to be avoided as profanations of the name and providence of God.

Both the *lot* and the *oath* are based upon the same principles, and respect the same doctrines, viz.: The Being and Perfections of Deity — his universal control of all events — and his particular providence, in governing all his works. The sinfulness of profane swearing consists in treating with levity the name of God — in impairing our sense of his majesty — in weakening the restraints which his authority imposes upon our lusts and passions — and in thus diffusing the influence of practical atheism. If, then, the lot be an ordinance of the same general nature as we have attempted to prove — if it involves the same homage to God's government and providence — if it is calculated to promote the same great moral and social purposes, who can doubt that the irreligious use of it is of the same complexion with the irreligious use of an oath, and, like it, belongs to the crime of *taking God's name in vain*, which he has said he will not hold guiltless? We question not, that many who would not, on any account, pollute their lips with a profane oath, are in the habit of misapplying the lot without any conscientious scruples whatever. The reason is to be sought in their want of information and reflection.— That they sin, however, is not the less certain, than that the lot is an appeal to God. Their sin may be referred to their ignorance, but that ignorance, unless it be invincible, is nevertheless culpable, and the excuse grows less valid with every opportunity of acquiring information, and with every call to consider their ways.

But as *a general truth is often best perceived in its details*, we have now just opened our subject so far as to be prepared for exemplifying our principles, by pointing out some of the many abuses which are commonly made of the lot and games of chance, which are in such common use for amusement, but oftener by gamesters, for the purpose of stripping their silly and unguarded fellow men of their property, without affording the least compensation.

Much remains unsaid, to do justice to this subject. A distinction should be drawn between such games as are innocent in their own nature, which might be used for amusement innocently, and those games which, in their own nature, would be criminal, and a profanation of God's name. *Games* which are used purely as *tests of skill, agility, or strength*, may be innocently used for amusement and health; while games of chance, or which involve the lot, or those of a mixed nature, such as *cards* and *backgammon*, and others, involving both chance and skill, are always criminal when used either for amusement or gain, and, in their consequences, draw after them, and

naturally lead to, the most disastrous results. And *last*, though *not least*, that very common and most insidious, and therefore the worst and most dangerous species of gambling, the wide spread system of lotteries. These are grave and serious subjects, intimately affecting the morals and prosperity of a community, and which imperiously ask for discussion, that public sentiment might be enlightened and held awake to their secret and deleterious influence. It was my intention, when I undertook this subject, to have gone more at large, and to have carried it out into its practical results; but I have trespassed already so long upon your patience, that I shall have to forbear. Should it hereafter appear desirable, this subject may be resumed, and something more like a finish given to it, at some future occasion, leaving you in the mean time an opportunity of digesting what you have already heard.

It is probable that some of my hearers have been startled at the novelty and strangeness of some of my positions and arguments, while others have been more amused than edified; and it would be well if some may not have been offended or dissatisfied at hearing their former opinions, and practice, too, represented as unjustifiable and profane. Whatever may have been the effects produced by this discussion, if it should set people to *thinking* and *reflecting* upon the subject, one object which I had in view shall have been gained. The subject demands more serious reflection and examination than it has ever yet received. Bring open and candid minds to this work, and I have no fear for the result.

I shall conclude with one word to my judicious, reflecting, and learned hearers:

"Si quid novisti, rectius istis,
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum."

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